REVIEWS

Il Principio Antianemico-Pernicioso. By G. Astaldi and M. Baldini. Pavia: Il Farmaco, Monograph. January, 1948. Pp. 234, figs. 54. Price 1,200 lire.

This monograph on the pernicious anaemia factor by two members of Ferrata's school of haematology appears at a moment when the discovery of folic acid and the production of new and powerful liver concentrates have created fresh interest in and raised new questions about the origin and treatment of the macrocytic anaemias. The authors have set out to give an interim review of this rapidly changing subject, and have produced a clear and up-to-date summary of its theoretical and practical aspects.

The book is divided into two parts: the first deals with the nature of the liver principle and of the extrinsic and intrinsic factors, the properties of the various commercial and experimental liver extracts, desiccated stomach preparations, and the pteroyl-glutamic acid group. In a very full review of the older preparations covering both the English and continental literature, the only important omission is that of crude "proteolysed" liver. Recent work on folic acid, its conjugates, and thiamine is adequately described. The second part covers the methods of assaying the activity of therapeutic preparations both from the theoretical and practical aspects, and includes much of the author's original work. After a critical account of the common therapeutic tests, based on the reticulocyte and erythrocyte responses, they present a review of many other suggested methods of assay, all of which they reject as either non-specific or as yet insufficiently controlled. There are in fact no rapid or large-scale assay methods, and this explains most of the difficulties in research on new preparations. The author's own solution of the problem is based on studies of bone marrow both *in vivo* and *in vitro* and consists in a statistical analysis of the diminution in size, under treatment, of the red blood cell precursors; but, as it involves multiple marrow punctures and a laborious technique, it is doubtful if this attractive suggestion will be widely adopted in practice.

Defects in an otherwise excellent book are the careless quotation of references and the absence of an index. In spite of these, it can be recommended to anyone in search of a full and balanced account of present-day knowledge of the nature and application of the substances used in the treatment of pernicious anaemia.

F. W. GUNZ.

Major Endocrine Disorders. By S. Leonard Simpson. Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press. Second edition, 1948. Pp. 552+xxii. Price 42s.

The new edition of this book gives a good picture of the recent development of endocrinology. This speciality is growing fast, and it will be increasingly difficult for the general physician to keep abreast of its progress. The way the book is written will help him in this task. Each endocrine organ is treated separately; after a short review of its physiology the clinical disorders connected with its dysfunction are dealt with. These are often accompanied by typical case histories and by excellent photographs. The pituitary gland and the gonads are given more space than the other endocrine organs; in the latter some disorders are treated which cannot be strictly termed major disorders, but this is probably unavoidable. The chapter on the pancreas and diabetes mellitus is comparatively short. Biochemical methods used in the diagnosis of the disorders described are not given, and the biochemical data are sometimes scanty, but this is compensated by the introduction of ample references. On the whole, the author has successfully avoided cramming his book with too much detail; it will be a welcome help to the student and to the clinician.

H. HERXHEIMER.

Nutrition and Hormones. By L. T. Samuels. American Lecture Series No. 11. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford. 1948. Pp. 48. Price 8s. 6d.

This is a series of short essays on the mutual interaction of hormones and nutritional factors. It aims at correlating the gross metabolic changes in endocrine diseases on the one hand with the effect of various types of malnutrition on the endocrine glands on the other. Since these materials make up the greater part of modern endocrinology the result is a rather brief account of the relationships of the various hormones which is perhaps too incomplete to be of value to the average pathologist or clinician. For example, the effect of iodine deficiency on the thyroid gland is dismissed in six lines and that of thiouracil in four. The book is attractively bound and the well chosen bibliography of 108 recent references is a valuable introduction to the literature.

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